

**Help teens
drive safer,
live longer.**

Dear parents of teen drivers:

In November of 1997, I read a newspaper article about a statewide movement to introduce something called "Graduated Driver Licensing." I knew immediately I had to work to see that the proposal became law. You see, just a few months earlier, I had to do something that no parent is prepared to do - plan their child's funeral.

My daughter, Tobi, was a passenger in a car driven by her boyfriend on a bright summer day in July 1997. Both were 16 years old. The vehicle left a two-lane county road at a high rate of speed, struck a tree, became airborne and landed upside down in a marsh. The driver survived, but Tobi died instantly from massive head injuries. Tobi was a special girl, an honor roll student in both academic and conduct who loved competing in state swimming championships. We would never again enjoy her infectious smile, sense of humor or her zest for life.

When I told my family I intended to work for passage of Graduated Driver Licensing, my then 12-year-old daughter Jesse was livid. Once, she became so upset she wouldn't speak to me for days. Later, to my surprise, Jesse became one of the most eloquent supporters of graduated licensing, offering powerful testimony at legislative hearings.

Now, Jesse and all teen drivers in Wisconsin will get their licenses under the state's new Graduated Driver Licensing law. This law will save lives. This is not a punitive law, it is not punishment for teen drivers. In fact, it gives our teens more behind the wheel experience and a period of continued learning after receiving their license. The more experience young drivers have, the more crashes decrease.

No law can bring back my daughter or the other teens you read about almost daily. However, graduated driver licensing will save hundreds of lives in the future, and prevent families from dealing with the grief and horror of losing the child in a traffic crash. It is my greatest hope that parents and new drivers understand the concept of the law and use the additional training time as it was intended, to produce safe, experienced drivers.

Sincerely,
Keith Miller